

EXHIBIT C

Mormons Hit By Child-Sex Lawsuits

\$4 million verdict against Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is first result; other suits are pending.

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A RECENT \$4 MILLION VERDICT against the Mormon church in a child sex abuse case may be the first of many to come, according to plaintiffs' lawyers and victims' advocates.

Although the church's legal problems may seem small compared with the multitude of such cases filed against the Catholic Church in more than a decade, lawyers and victims' advocates say that the Mormon church is faced with serious liability of its own because it has mishandled reports of pedophiles in its ranks.

In October, a Houston-area jury awarded \$4 million to a 13-year-old boy after finding that the Mormon church and four local church officials had failed to protect him from being molested by a man in his congregation. And there are at least five more suits pending against the church around the country, seeking huge

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Mormon Church Defends Child Sex-Abuse Suits

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punitive damages awards. Each case claims that the church followed a pattern of failing to respond properly to reports of abuse by Mormons and of trying to keep incidents quiet to avoid embarrassment to the church, they allege.

Two lawsuits filed in Texas and one in Mississippi state courts by Clay Dugas, the Orange, Texas, plaintiff, lawyer who won the \$4 million verdict, allege that local church officials failed to protect Mormon children from pedophiles in their congregations.

A suit filed in federal court in Oregon claiming that a local church official failed to reveal to a Mormon woman who sought his advice that a man, who eventually moved into her home and abused her son, was a pedophile. Scott v. Corp. of the Presiding Bishop of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 98-366 (D. Ore.).

A \$750 million suit filed in West Virginia state court claiming that church of-

ficials failed to report a father's physical and sexual abuse of his children, which was uncovered when police received a videotape showing the father forcing the children to perform sex acts. The church recently won a dismissal on jurisdictional grounds, but plaintiffs' lawyers say that they may appeal or refile. Doe v. Raleigh General Hospital, 96-25 (Cir. Ct. Raleigh Co., W. Va.).

Each of the cases seeks millions in punitive damages from the church. "We believe the real story is that there are hundreds and hundreds more cases," says Columbia, S.C., sole practitioner Michael G. Sullivan, one of the plain-

Clay Dugas: His client won a \$4 million sex-abuse verdict against the Mormon church.



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Attorneys in the West Virginia case. Officials and lawyers for the Salt Lake City-based church, formally known as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, deny that there is anywhere near that number of cases. They claim that the church properly handles allegations of sexual abuse and that it cannot be held responsible for the crimes of a small number of pedophiles in its ranks. Addressing child and spouse abuse at an October church conference, church President Gordon B. Hinckley said, "We are doing everything we can to stamp out this terrible evil."